



THE 1804 U. S. EAGLE

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JRCS

JOHN REICH COLLECTORS SOCIETY
P.O.Box 205 Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197

The purpose of the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) is to encourage the study of numismatics, particularly United States gold and silver coins minted before the introduction of the Seated Liberty design, and to provide technical and educational information concerning such coins.

The John Reich Journal is the official publication of the Society and is distributed to all members in good standing. Members are encouraged to submit any articles encouraging the study of numismatics and/or relating to early United States gold and silver coins to the editor. Especially needed are articles containing new information about die varieties, die states of published die varieties, attribution methods, collections, collectors, etc. Inquiries about specific varieties will be directed to one of the experts in that series. All correspondence should be directed to:

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The challenge of completing this issue by 30 September was delayed ever so slightly by the need to limit the number of pages to 40. I originally planned on 32 pages so I would have a running start on the final issue for this year, but the surfeit (isn't that a lovely word. meaning - too great an amount or supply) of articles made the final cut difficult. The late arrival of manuscripts on the minor coin series just begged for inclusion, and the page count didn't work out with 36. If I only had an article on dollars to include.

The manuscript deadline for the next issue is 14 November. It looks like I will be able to keep my promise to finish Vol. 4 before the end of the calendar year. No applause yet! But please send in those articles, especially on any series other than half dollars. I have almost enough material on hand for half an issue just on half dollars. Another suggestion for someone. How about a review of William Atkinson's "Frequency of Appearance" publication? I haven't seen it, yet. I should send Bill \$5 for a copy.

An update on the \$350,000 1829 Large Planchet half eagle: apparently slabbing the 'famous' Garrett coin has had a negative effect on its value. The piece was the top grosser for Bowers & Merena's ANA convention sale when it realized \$115,500, with the juice. For David Bowers' comment see his letter on page 5. Did I win my bet? It was pictured, again, in the August 29, 1989 "Numismatic News" (N.N.) article about the sale. In the last issue of the **Journal**, Vol.4, No.1, I reported that the coin went back to the consignor when it didn't reach the reserve bid in the Stack's October, 5, 1988 "Rare and Important United States Gold" sale. I gave the price as \$181,500, and that may be an error. I reread the N.N. correction article and it states that the prices realized reflect the reserve price, not the price bid at the sale. I will see if I can find out the actual amount bid last October. Did any of our readers attend the sale and record the bids?

There was another interesting side light to the ANA sale. The second highest price realized was \$99,000, with the 10% buyers commission, for a 1797 half dollar graded MS-60 or finer. I am sure a lot of our readers would love to own that coin. Did one of you buy it? With that kind of price, an uncirculated set of half dollars by date becomes rather prohibitive and by variety, if they were available, the cost would tax a Malcolm Forbes (The new symbol of ostentatious wealth?). Mr. 104, who knows?

One of the things that I have planned to mention in the past but haven't, is the subject of mail damaged copies of the **JR Journal**. If you receive a badly damaged copy and would like a replacement, please let me know. Newer members who would like to complete their set of **Journals** can order them for \$3.50 each or three for \$10. The first issue, Vol.1 No.1, is only available in photocopy.

Enclosed is an application blank for the **Society**. If you know of anyone interested in joining, please recruit them. I am sending these out now so there will be no confusion with the renewal forms. If you can use additional copies, just let me know. Please be advised that 1989/90 renewal notices will be mailed out with the November 1989 issue of the **JR Journal**.

There is some good news for the bust half dollar collectors. It was announced at the BHNC club meeting at Pittsburgh, that Donald Parsons (Al Overton's son-in-law) was planning to release an updated version of the bust half 'bible.' He had some page samples to show around and some of the new photos. The format will be very similar to the old book. The photos will be larger, as will be the book. The manuscript should be completed this year and the new book should be available by next summer. I wonder if this, and the attendant publicity, will make the series even more popular?

In the, "We get letters department." One of the benefits (if you like to get mail - curses, otherwise) of being President of **JRCS** is I get a lot of promotional material sent to me. I think most of it is due to being listed in the various reference catalogs on organizations. A couple of weeks back I was surprised to get an envelope from DOMINO'S PIZZA. One of their employees, Steve Fraser, (1984 Olympic Gold Medal winner in Greco-Roman wrestling) gives a series of four inspirational presentations, under the title "Going for the Gold in the Business World." With our new charter including early U.S. gold issues, I wonder if anyone would be interested in the one titled, "Risk Taking: Going for the Gold"? Another memorable mailing was a pocket organizer with our name embossed on the cover. The only trouble was the name was misspelled. I wasn't sure if there was an honest mistake or if it was done intentionally, so I wouldn't use it as a freebie.

This issue is a well mixed bag, and something should appeal to everyone. One of our more faithful letter writers, Hugh Cooper, sent a very long missive and I have given him GUEST EDITOR status. His story begins on page 7. Following that (page 12) is another test to try your mettle. Russ Logan has included more denominations and thinks the answers will be harder to find.

Jules Reiver relates the discovery of a new half dime variety (1829 V-18) beginning on page 14. Then, on page 16, Mark Smith tells us about his new 1829 V-17 half dime.

When I received the dime story (page 17) from Bill Subjack I intended to reply with the flippant remark, "easy, just send it back in with your money and wait for three or four months." After all PCGS is consistent, and can tell MS-62 coins from 61's and 63's. Now things have changed slightly. PCGS announced at the Pittsburgh ANA Convention that they have a new "NumisCap" coin capsule. It will be even more difficult to break, but Bill can get a 50 cent reward if he sends in the paper insert from the old PCGS slab. If the dime goes back to PCGS, I will be very interested in the second chapter of the story.

The classic half eagles article, by John McCloskey, (pp 18-23) missed the cut for the last issue. He wants to encourage the study and collecting of the last of the modified John Reich design gold. He got me started on half eagles, and it is interesting. They are available, lovely to look at, and not that expensive, unless you must collect MS-60 or above coins. Are there any other gold collectors out there?

Bob Spangler's new quarter discovery (1836 B-5), on page 24, leads off the first of two quarter articles. The second begins on page 26, and marks Bill Bugert's first appearance in the **JR Journal**. He tells us about some unlisted die characteristics for 1818 B-8 quarters, and has promised to send in additional articles.

The next four articles are about half dollars, and all missed the last issue because of space and my misplacing two of them. Mike Conroy starts off with THE OTHER CORRADO ROMANO SALE. Next is a joint article from Ed Souders and Craig Sholley on the 1834 O-113 and O-114 half dollar varieties. It should elicit some responses from the fifty cent collectors. I already have the makings of a contrary opinion article to go in the next issue. Jay Fackelman then tells us about one of his loves the 1807 O-111, the 'bearded goddesses.' Following that is the story of my discovering an 1827 O-127 half dollar variety in my dupe box.

Last, but not least on the inside back cover is the preliminary program for the ANS Coinage of the Americas Conference. A registration form is also enclosed. Again, all are encouraged to attend. If you can't be there, the proceedings are a real bargain at \$15.

—DAVID J. DAVIS

PLAUDITS, PANS, AND PERPLEXING POINTS

I have just finished reading your article about the 1829 (Large Planchet) half eagle in the July **JR Journal**, (Vol.1, No.1), and found it very interesting. You will be interested in knowing that the 1829 half eagle at the ANA Sale opened at \$100,000 and sold for \$105,000 plus the 10% buyers' fee, to a floor bidder. Thus your story has now come round full circle.

Q. David Bowers



OK, so I admit it! You got me on the answer to question No. 14. Personally, I knew of possibly six examples but not seven or more (I especially liked the "or more" statement). I stand corrected. This is one of the reasons why we are lucky that David J. Davis is our **Journal** Editor.

As a point of interest (and revenge - HA!), I would like to mention that in question No. 8, answer (a) should technically read "50 C./UNI" not \$0.50/UNI.

Between you and I there was also another small error. On question No.5, the value on a Capped Bust half dollar shows up on the coin "Three Times, not twice as stated in the quiz. Once on the reverse and TWICE ON THE EDGE! Still, all of this was quite fun and I hope the membership enjoyed it as much as I did.

In all seriousness though, Shortly, you should be receiving a call (or MS) from Craig Sholly on our joint article on the die study of 1834 O-113 & O-114 (I already sent him the finished MS but he was waiting for the photographs from the lab). Hope you find it as interesting as we did (Damn! Now the answer to question No.4 will change).

Lastly, I would like to mention that I am in favor of your latest layout change in the **Journal**. Thanks to your persistence and care the **Journal** just keeps getting better. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Edgar E. Souders

Here's one vote against publication of any more 'slab photos,' such as those appearing on pp. 17-18 of **JR Journal** Vol.4, No.1.

First of all, such inherently muddy shots are useless to illustrate die variety diagnostics: "star 1 points to lower part of denticle" -- come

on! Given the photo at hand, about the most that can be said is, "appears to be a bust half dime, of indeterminate date."

Second, and more important, slabs have no place in a publication dedicated to real numismatic study, be it serious or whimsical, since they represent its antithesis: the twin ogres of Ignorance (I don't need to grade this coin -- the Experts already have) and Instant Marketability (What's it Worth?). This is not to say that real numismatists won't buy slabbed coins that strike their fancy; but they can damned well break them out of their plastic tombs before photographing them for the **Journal**, or any other collector-based publication.

Harry Salyards

Thanks for the continuing issues of **JR Journal**. They are all excellent and every issue causes me to either check coins or, as in Vol.4, No.1, pg.7, write to tell Jeff Rock that I have two copies of the Early Half Dollar Die Varieties - A Supplement, copyright 1964 by Al Overton. One copy was included in a copy of his new revised edition of EHDDV, 1794-1836, published 1970. I bought the book and supplement from George Kolbe from his M.B.S. XXV, 1 February 1986 (Lot 465) for \$44.

That supplement was inscribed "To my friend Dick Picker with best wishes Al Overton" and is in mint condition. Enclosed in the lot was also a typed six-page letter from Paul Munson to Richard Picker dated 30 June 1964 and giving much varied information on early half dollars. The letter needs to be published in **JRJ** and I plan to submit it soon.

My other copy of the supplement was bought in July, 1967, in Colorado Springs at one of ANA's annual summer book sales and I hate to admit that I "stole" it for 25¢!

Are there really not too many Supplements available? Like Jeff, I have not seen any listed in sales or priced lists. Please, is anyone out there listening? How many copies do you have? Send notes to **JRJ**.

Russ Hibbs

I am writing to you in response to the article titled DOUBLE PROFILE BUST HALVES by William Atkinson, Vol.3, No.1, pg 22. I believe I have a coin not mentioned in Mr. Atkinson's article that he might be interested in knowing about. It is an 1812 O-103, with a double profile. I just thought I'd throw in my fifty cents or half a dollars worth.

Christopher Beck

* GUEST EDITORIAL *

I have just committed to memory Vol.4 No.1. It is a splendid issue with a rating of R-8, for this year.

I want to comment upon a couple of items. First though, would you let me know, or publish in the next **Journal** how many members there are in **JRCS**? It bears on a couple of remarks I wish to make later.

The reformatting on page 15 is clear and economical. If we are to have a slick **Journal**, I think it should look less typewritten than it does at present.

I like the new look. The wide left margin is probably superfluous to most members, since I suspect they don't write notes in the margins. I think most of us try to keep clean copies. (Page 14 does not appear to be reformatted.)

I enjoyed Edgar Souders' THIRTY QUESTIONS. I do not know which question you changed, but would like to know. Like you, "I am not going to report my score." You would probably believe it.

I thought Pierre Fricke's article on computers and coins was quite instructive. In fact, I was making a similar speech two nights ago to a couple of friends. Pierre's was a nice succinct treatment. Even so, when Pierre said "investment coins are an industry, collector coins, a hobby" he was trying to maintain a pleasant dichotomy which I think cannot be supported. Apparently there are two reasons folks want to split industry and hobby. One is that in many minds investment and industry imply greed, ignorance, blind driving for capital, and even callousness. The other is that collector and hobby imply purposeful, methodical, untrammelled pursuit of pure enjoyment unsullied by crass mercantile impulses. Neither description is entirely correct. I have in the past striven assiduously to arrive at suitable language, but have stalled. For a while I used the expression "hobby-cum-business," but it was neglected and so fell into disuse. You cannot separate buyers from sellers either; dealers, investors and collectors are both buyers and sellers. The attempt to imply that collector/hobbyist are 'purer' than industrial/investors, or that investment buying and selling soils the hobby and wrecks a normal market, fails to take into account that many collectors are hustlers and some investors are students of coins and the market. Many collectors are part time dealers (and pay wholesale prices for their collection pieces), and many collectors buy

for investment. But more than anything else, it is true that collectors buy 'investment' coins, and investors buy 'collector' coins.

I have settled on the term industry to refer to the hobby-cum-business. It includes 'industrious,' like bees, as well as its other standard meanings. It is hard for me to see the hobby-cum-business split down the middle. It is all interdependent and tied together. In his article, Pierre Fricke's desire to differentiate between industry and hobby is actually caused by his need to identify contemporary coins (machine made dies) and earlier coins (hand made dies). After about 1836, The U.S. Mint made coins largely by machine with very little hand punching, mainly dates. His remark, which I quoted above, is actually merely an aside.

Numismatics, even in its purest forms, is commercial at least in the sense that it costs money. Local clubs are in business. If they aren't, they can't survive. The ANA is big business. The ANS is seemingly less commercial, but its fund-raisers are big time. 'Pure' collectors may exist, but they are acquiring assets, using presumably surplus funds, and they know it. Even the old Whitman 'boards' were advertised as money makers. "Fill this board and I'll send you 50 bucks!" Collectors made as much money, or tried to, in the commemorative coin scandals of the 1930's, as dealers or speculators did. Collectors tried very hard to take advantage of the bag and roll outrages of the early 1960's. There are, I presume, 'pure' collectors and researchers who do not immerse themselves in the day to day business of numismatics, but these 'collectors' do not buy coins and for this reason I decline to call these folks collectors; they are accumulators. If they don't find what they're missing (if they know what they are missing) they will never own it. 'Pure' researchers want to publish, preferably for pay, or at least for recognition. If they don't want to publish, and hide in their carrels day and night, they have nothing to do with the hobby-cum-business, and they have no influence.

I see the entire industry, in all its facets, caught up in commercialism. And I believe the hindsight of the future will see 'coins,' including paper money, medals and tokens, in the same way 'art' is looked upon today - as commodities, to be bought and sold.

The hobby horse which exists in today's remembrance is long gone and should be consigned to history along with 'penny boards' for profit. Another thing about Pierre's article. He speaks of grading by machine. I wish he had said that a personal view after machine grading is required. Many years ago I worked a short time for a dealer doing repetitive grading of common and scarce coins, and the dealer reviewed coins from time to time for final judgement. This was mainly for

pricing. He wanted "to see how much coin was there." He meant money. I think the same thing will be required after machine grading.

Now in the matter of refusing to respond to the condition census poll. It is a problem we always have with us. EAC has lived with it from the beginning, and it was a problem before that.

I presume there are folks who are solitary collectors, and who are so by choice. There are also, I suppose, collectors who are quite gregarious and loquacious within the hobby but who plain figure their holdings are nobody's damn business. I know folks like that. I once worked in a paint store in Memphis. Early on in my paint career a character loped in wearing distinctly pastoral garb and demanded, "Gimme four or five gallons of that green quick-dry paint." "What are you painting?" I asked naively, trying to find out what kind of paint he needed. But I erred. He said, "I believe that's my damn business, don't you?" I saw the veins standing out on his neck and forehead, and I instantly conceded his point. He bought five gallons of paint by price and not by purpose, and I daresay he was right because he did not attempt to return it. I have met this man many times and in many places since then, and even if he's wearing a three piece suit his certitude should not be doubted.

You mention the matter of anonymity. Actually this happens when a person will report his inventory, but does not want his name or address published. This is for security and of course should be respected. But a person who simply does not want to report what he owns should be respected too.

On the other hand if a person advances a reason for his silence such as that opportunistic dealers might attempt to gouge collectors with obscene prices on scarce or rare varieties, that is arguable. In your remarks on pages 3 and 4 you cover most of the arguments against refusal to report; but there is always more to say.

Before getting into this matter any further, I think a definition of the condition census is appropriate. Following is a quote from "Penny Whimsy" by William H. Sheldon, who, if he did not invent the condition census, was the first to publish it. I love to quote Sheldon because I want to start a contagion. Sheldon's book is the best book on numismatics I have ever seen, and it is better than a hell of a lot of pure literature. Silver lovers will have no trouble enjoying and learning from Sheldon. Sheldon offers an example, Sheldon-71, a cent of 1794: "The condition census is 55-45 (55-50-50-50-45-40). This is simply a mnemonic summary of the following information: The finest example of the variety known to the writer or his collaborators is now

believed to merit a condition grading of AU-55. The average condition of the next five coins of this variety, to the best of our present knowledge, is about EF-45. In detail, the six finest coins of variety S-71, listed in descending order of condition, are AU-55, AU-50, AU-50, AU-50, EF-45, EF-40. It cannot be too often repeated that research in such a field may never be perfect or complete. We will never be quite certain that the six coins listed are actually the six finest of the variety. It is in fact this element of uncertainty that lends much of the charm to the study of Early Cents (or silver). The goal is not to become certain, but to try to get the condition census a little more correct as time goes on."

The first thing I wish to emphasize here is that a condition census is not a rarity scale. It tells the student of coins the grades of the top six coins of a variety, and in the example above these CC coins are Rarity-7 by grade, but the variety is R-2. In other words, a person looking for a CC coin is looking for an R-7 coin. There are of course varieties of which less than six are known to be in numismatic circulation. In EAC, these are known as 'Non-Collectibles,' or NC's.

Condition Census coins (top six; it is my contention that all coins are part of the CC, but no one cares) always command a good premium. What we have on pages 11-14 of the **Journal** is a listing of the best coin which each of 14 persons owns. I cannot believe that a mere 14 collectors in **JRCS** collect pre-turban halves. This is regardless of the fact that some folks declined to participate. What basis is used to contact respondents? No one asked me, so far as I know. Also what effort is made to determine what CC coins are in 'permanent' collections? Where does BHNC stand on this? Do they have a CC for the series Russell Logan has canvassed? Or is this merely a **JRCS** census? If so, what is its value?

If these questions have any significance, it seems we have a long haul before a reliable CC is available. Is there any coordination of effort being made by **JRCS** and BHNC? An example of the problem as I see it is Lot 462, an 1806 O-108 in the Munson portion of Superior's Jascha Heifetz Sale. Superior is pleased to call this the finest known specimen of the 1806 O-108 variety, and yet the **JRCS** CC lists two pieces in EF-40. The same thing occurs with Lot 464, an 1806 O-110 in AU-50, which Superior states is the finest known, while **JRCS** reports an AU-55.

Now, a couple of more questions for the feller who doesn't want to report his holdings for the condition census poll. If a dealer has in stock a Condition Census coin, how is he going to 'gouge' a collector when all CC coins are extremely rare, and very few 'gouging' dealers

buy CC coins anyway! Also, with 14 respondents to the JRCS poll, reliability doesn't seem to be a factor, although some folks are hard to convince if they read something, anything, which is to their advantage. Ultimately when a dependable CC is available a collector who is looking to buy a CC coin will have to be prepared to pay. A collector who contributes to the CC can affect the market only if he already owns a variety in the top six coin CC. If he does not own a particular variety in the CC, it makes no difference whether he reports his best coins.

In short, why not report one's holdings? If Alpha owns variety X in the top six CC, he might as well report it because he doesn't need it. On the other hand, if Alpha does not own variety X in the top six CC, he can't report it.

Another question I forgot to ask: If a collector has two specimens of a variety does he report them both? It is possible for a person to own two CC coins of the same variety. Not likely, but possible.

Well, David, this started out as a letter, but it's damn near an article. I'm too weary to rewrite this thing, or to type it.

Hugh Cooper

Briefly, Hugh. All members of BHNC were encouraged to participate, but some did not. Their census information is privileged, and could not be included without consent. The Munson collection is included in our census and the grade discrepancy is attributable to Superior's conservative grading of circulated coinage. And, of course, there will always be a difference of opinion about grading. Some of the collectors list dupes of a variety, but most of them are sub-varieties and we usually just include the best one listed.

On a late breaking news story, I hear the Paul Munson (Jascha Heifetz Sale) 1827 O-127 coin went for \$6000. Would you believe \$46,000 for the 1806 O-108? It sounds like the sale should make another very interesting story. Sheridan???? Anyone else?

the Editor

PLAUDITS, PANS, AND PERPLEXING POINTS continued

First, I was happy to hear you decided to stay on as Editor. I hope my "Reggie Jackson" letter played a small part in your decision.

Other things. Edgar's Quiz. Score 23. Should have had three more. Excuse - watching The Mets lose a close game. Your change - 1817/4. As soon as I checked the answers the huge sign lit up "Breen." Thanks to the **Journal**, Edgar and I have exchanged many letters over the past year. That is what it is all about.

Lenny Schramm

TEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS

I did not score very well on the thirty question Bust Half quiz by Edgar Souders in the last issue of the **Journal**. But I think I realized my poor score before looking at the answers because I could not find the correct answers in the multiple choices for five of the questions listed. As for the sixth question which I disagreed with the answer, I suspect that our Editor changed the answer because he forgot that the quiz was confined to only bust halves and not 'John Reich' coinage. (Question 11 - The most overdates - answer "b")

It was at lunch on Wednesday shortly after the **JRCS** meeting when, reading the **Journal** for the first time, I challenged the answer to Question 5 - How many times does the value appear on a bust half? The denomination appears three times on each Bust Half Dollar. Two are located on the edge: "FIFTY CENTS" and "HALF A DOLLAR" and the last on the reverse: "50 C." And we all know quarters were also minted in 1815 (question 30 - In what year were halves the only year struck?).

The final three questions in limbo are predicated on the fact that the Mint issued three crushed lettered edge half dollars dated 1833, 1834 and 1835. These proof pieces were produced in a closed collar die (question 12) had beading around the obverse and reverse periphery as does the 1836 Overton Reverse-E (question 18) and when added to the accepted number of die marriages brings the total to 453 (question 4).

I have always felt that multiple answer quizzes were a bit like objective grading. So not to be sour grapes I offer a subjective quiz. And a prize (lunch following the Seattle **JRCS** meeting) for the first person with 10 questions answered correctly. Officers and Life Members of **JRCS** are not eligible for the prize but are encouraged to participate. Answers will be mailed to all who participate.

JOHN REICH SILVER QUIZ

- 1) What half dime variety is known to have a cud so large that there is no date visible on EF+ examples?
- 2) If you had the opportunity to examine 100 EF bust half dimes all laying reverse up on the table but were only given one minute to select five coins, what single diagnostic feature would you look for to cherry pick the R-8's and R-7's?

- 3) What proof bust dime marriage does Walter Breen claim to have seen but is unknown today?
- 4) The reverse dies of the Heraldic dimes and quarter eagles and the Heraldic half dollars and eagles are identical in size and without a denomination. Seven dies are known to have been shared between the dimes and quarter eagles; what dies are known to be shared between the half dollars and eagles?
- 5) Several articles have been written on the 'E' and 'L' counterstamps found on 1815 and 1825 quarters. On what other silver Federal coinage have these counterstamps been found?
- 6) How can one positively identify a 1823 bust quarter if the date is illegible?
- 7) The 1817 O-105a 'single leaf' half dollar variety is well known in the collecting fraternity today. What other varieties are known to exist with only a 'single leaf'?
- 8) Three identical uniface bust halves are known to exist in copper. What obverse die was used?
- 9) On several occasions the Mint filed delivery reports for silver Federal coinage for coins never found by collectors. Name the denominations and years.
- 10) Name two consecutive years in which die cracks bisecting the obverse or our silver bust coinage were commonplace. List the denomination and varieties.

EXTRA CREDIT

A uniface bust half reverse was struck on a broad tin planchet (Judd Appendix A); what is the reverse die variety?

Russell Logan

Another New Half Dime Variety -- 1829 V-18

In Vol. 3, No. 2/3 of the JR Journal (page 39), there is an announcement of the new half dime variety discovered by Alan Bricker -- 1829 V-17. It is the combination of the obverse of V-3 and the reverse of V-4.

Well, Alan has done it again. He discovered still another variety of 1829, which has been assigned the number V-18. It has the same obverse die, that of V-3 and V-17, and the reverse die of V-10, V-11 and V-16.



1829 V-18 Half Dime Obverse

The key to Alan's success in finding new varieties is thoroughness. Many collectors check the reverse of a half dime, then quickly check the obverse to find which of the three possibilities, in this case V-10, V-11 or V-16, this one is. Alan goes farther than that. He checks the entire obverse, including the relation between stars 1, 7, 8 and 13 and their respective dentils.

It would be a good idea to check any V-3's to see which of three reverses it has, and to check the V-10, V-11 and V-16's to make sure that they have the correct reverses.

Jules Reiver



1829 V-18 Half Dime Reverse

ANOTHER 1829 V-17 HALF DIME ???

After nearly completing my rounds at a recent local Winston-Salem, North Carolina Coin Show, I noticed a darkly-toned 1829 Capped Bust Half Dime in a dealer's showcase. It was not attributed according to Valentine. Knowing that there were a large number of R-5, R-6, and R-7 varieties of this date, I took the time at the dealer's table to check it out.

Using my own personal notes and Reiver's Variety Identification Manual (VIM), I began with the reverse. The coin had the V-4, V-5, and V-17 reverse, with at least an R-5 rarity rating (according to your census). The reverse closely matched Reiver's die state description for V-4c with filled S2 and a die crack at MER.

Since the lighting in this show was at a low level due to a recent power outage, and since for some reason, I have great difficulty attributing the obverses of 1829, I did not go through the agony of checking the diagnostic star locations at that time. I purchased the coin planning to attribute it later.

On the ride home, I picked up the December 1988 issue of the **JR Journal** to look at the CONDITION CENSUS - HALF DIMES 1827-1837 and, lo and behold, there was the Reiver article and photos of the V-17. I followed the Alan Bricker logic exactly, and sure enough S13 pointed to the lower half of the denticle. Then my dilemma. Did S1 really point to two denticles joined together? My coin has very weak denticles, and I nearly went blind trying to decide. The two denticles appear to be much closer together, but not necessarily joined. All other diagnostic stars match the Bricker coin. The photo displays the double denticle fairly clearly.

The reverse die state of my coin appears to match the photograph. The upper loop of S2 is filled; die cracks run from the rim above right side of M to E in AMERICA, with a small lump where the die crack meets rim. (This minor rim defect shows in the Bricker photo). On the obverse, there appears to be a small die crack from S13 to rim.

I am curious if any other readers have found this variety, since its publication, and what the current census may be. Keep looking everybody, there are surely more out there - probably disguised as V-4's.

Mark Smith

Mark does seem to have an 1829 V-17. I couldn't use the color photos supplied, they wouldn't reproduce very well - the Editor.

A SLABBED 1814 SMALL DATE DIME

First and foremost, I don't even like the date. The 1814 S.D. dime has always gotten too much glory as the only small date variety of 1814. Furthermore, it is normally ugly with a weak strike and poor surfaces. In any event, I found my first 1814 small date in the late 1970's - a solid Good-4. Though I believed it rare initially, I couldn't wait to upgrade the motley thing. This shouldn't have been hard at the time since the variety is an R-2 and there were not even a dozen bust dime collectors in the country in 1979. I found lustrous and rare varieties from 1809 to 1827, but no nice 1814 small dates. Finally a grundgy VF-20 came into my hands, but the search continued. By 1984 an OK VF-30 was in my set, followed the next year by a cleaned late die state EF-40. Perhaps I should have been satisfied, but having assembled most of a grading set already, I wanted a really nice piece to match my other 1814 varieties.

At last a rumor surfaced of a lustrous Uncirculated piece. Asking price was that of an AU-50 too! Unfortunately, after negotiating to see the piece, it turned out to be an AU-50 and the weakest strike I'd seen. Still, it was an upgrade and

Error coins often fire the imagination of variety collectors, so when Dave Bowers 20% off-centered bust dime was auctioned, I had to buy it. But why did it have to be the 1814 small date variety?

The struggle continued until last fall when a Pennsylvania dealer asked by phone if the 1814 small date was rare. I found it difficult to be civil by this time, until he noted its PCGS grade of MS-62. Finally, the coin of my dreams (nightmares ??) had arrived. Reluctant to mail the piece, we agreed to meet at the next convenient bourse. The bourse lighting was bad and the coin had moderate toning. Yet you could see full cartwheel luster and the PCGS grade. The only problem was the plastic. I feel somewhat snobby about slab coins and had never bought one before. Still, how difficult could it be to remove a plastic cover?

To my joy the 'look' of the new purchase matched my other 1814's quite well. If I could only get the slab off! I pried it, banged it, threw it, to no avail. Finally, I carefully chiseled it open and laid it beside my other 1814's in good light. To my horror some light discoloration now looked like rub ... and where did that small rim ding come from? Could PCGS really have slipped me a slider?

Please don't think this article a complaint about 1814 small date dimes. The above is merely background info to my real problem and question. Does anyone out there know how to get a coin back into the PCGS slab?

Bill Subjack

Classic Gold Half Eagles

United States Classic gold half eagles were struck for only a five year period from 1834 to 1838. This short series has a total mintage of slightly more than 2.1 million pieces with only a tiny fraction of these pieces still surviving today. The series was struck during a period in our history when the dies were individually prepared so that the characteristics of each die can be easily identified. There are a number of interesting die varieties in the series which have been mostly ignored for over 150 years. After 25 years of studying early bust silver I decided to start cataloging the varieties of the Classic half eagles about two years ago. My work with the silver coinage of this period gave me invaluable experience in identifying key features that could be used to distinguish the dies used to strike these gold coins. In fact many of the same punches were used to prepare the gold dies and the deterioration of the dies with usage followed similar patterns to those I had seen in my earlier studies with silver coins.

During this period the thirteen stars on the obverse were individually punched into each die. The position of the stars relative to the denticles and relative to each other helps in identifying the dies. The four date digits were also punched individually into the dies and the position of these digits relative to the bust, relative to the denticles and relative to each other helps in identification. Also interesting is the fact that different date punches were used during the same year creating different date styles for some years. On the reverse the letters in UNITED STATES OF AMERICA were individually punched into the dies as was the denomination 5D. The position of these letters relative to the denticles and relative to each other helps to identify these dies. The position of the leaves in the eagle's left claw varies among the dies creating another feature for identification.

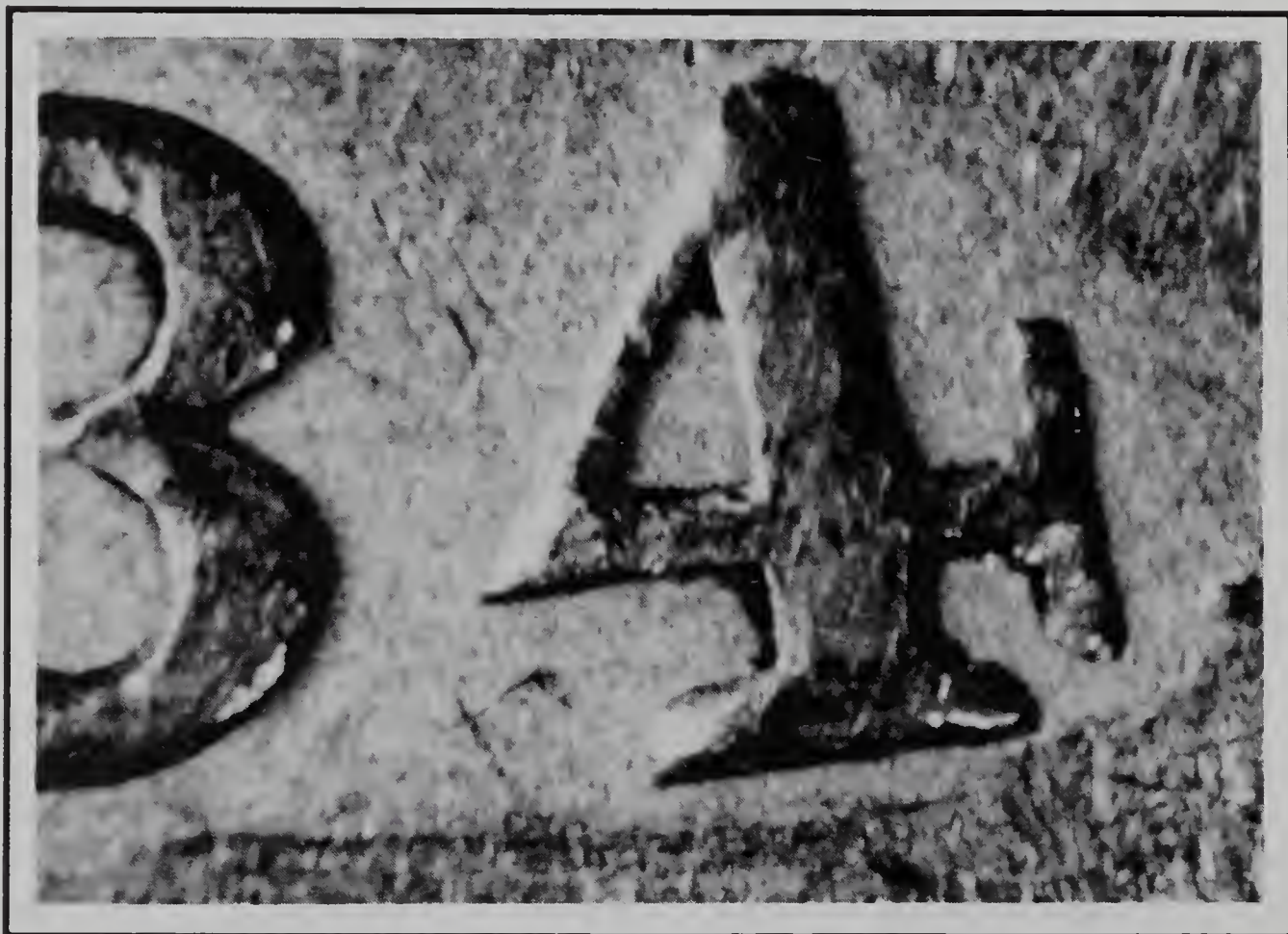
The Classic half eagle series consists of coins struck at the Philadelphia mint for the five years from 1834 to 1838 plus the first issues from the Charlotte and Dahlonega branch mints in 1838. Over the last two years I have seen perhaps 300 pieces of these seven dates and I have been able to identify a total of 31 varieties. The frequency with which I am discovering new varieties

indicates to me that I have identified most of the existing varieties. I am however aware that it will take some time for me to locate some of the really rare varieties in this series so I would have to describe my findings as preliminary. Nevertheless I do feel that I already have reasonably accurate estimates on relative rarity among the existing varieties and have furthermore seen many of the die states for the known varieties. At this time I think that it would be premature to attempt a striking sequence for the varieties or to even give detailed descriptions of the known varieties. The purpose of this article is to describe the scope of the studies that I have undertaken and to encourage interested collectors to contribute any information that they would have so that the information available on the series can be as complete as possible.

Specific information on the coins of each date might be appropriate at this time to understand the features that help identify the varieties. Some experience with the pieces in the series is necessary but with a little patience any collector can learn to quickly identify the varieties for the various years.

- 1834 -** Nine known varieties from five obverses and four reverses. This year is interesting in that there are three distinct date styles known for this year. One obverse has a digit 4 with a large crosslet on the right end of the crossbar of this digit. This is a known variety and it is considered rare. My own experience has been that the crosslet 4 variety is scarce but that it is available to the interested collector. I saw three examples of the variety at the 1988 ANA Convention in Cincinnati. Two other obverses of this year have a script 8 in the date with a large 4. The script 8 in the date has a thick center line that divides its two loops while sloping down from left to right. The two obverses with this date style are distinguished from each other by the position of the date relative to the curl over the digit 4. The other two obverses of this year have a block 8 with a small 4. The block 8 appears to be two circles resting on top of one another and the small 4 has a crossbar that extends well out beyond the base of the digit. One of the obverses of this style had the digit 4 in the date triple cut. This is a very interesting die but it was the most commonly used obverse of this year. In fact nearly a third of the pieces seen for this date have been struck from the obverse die with the triple cut 4. The four reverses of this date can be identified by the position of the denomination 5D relative to the feather tip and the branch stem. Furthermore two of the reverses have an eagle with a tongue while the other two reverses have an eagle without a

tongue. Two of the obverses for this year were used with three different reverses making for some interesting die marriages and raising interesting questions on the striking sequence of the varieties.



1834 Classic Half Eagle with Crosslet 4

1835 - Six known varieties from three obverses and five reverses. Three different date styles are seen on the three obverses. One obverse has a short 1, a block 8 and a 5 with a short straight flag. The second obverse has a tall 1 with a block 8. The third obverse has a tall 1 with a script 8 and a 5 with a long curved flag. The five reverses are identified by the position of the denomination 5D relative to the feather tip and the branch stem. Furthermore one of the reverses has an eagle with a tongue, another has a large bud between the leaves and a third has a leaf that nearly touches the left side of the U in UNITED. Several of the varieties are rare and the 1835 half eagle is not seen nearly as often as either the 1834 or 1836 dates.

1836 - Eight known varieties from six obverses and five reverses. One of the six obverses has a small 1 that is no bigger than the digit 8 next to it. The other five obverses have a digit 1 that is much taller than the 8 with the 1 sometimes towering over the 8. The obverses with the tall 1 are identified by the position of the 6 relative to the curl and by the presence of several strong die cracks that bisect the obverse on two of the dies. The reverses are identified by the position of the denomination 5D relative to the feather tip and the branch stem. One reverse has an eagle with a tongue, one has a doubled 5 in the denomination, one has a large bud between the leaves and two others have small buds within the leaves. The dies of this year are the most difficult to identify and I have been looking for better ways to key the dies of this year.



1836 Classic Half Eagle with Obverse Die Cracks

- 1837** - Three known varieties from three obverses and three reverses. Two of the obverses have a tall 1 with a block 8 that are distinguished by the position of the digit 7 relative to the curl. The third obverse has a small date with a script 8 in the date. The three reverses are identified by the bud that appears within the leaves. One reverse has a large bud, one a small bud and the third no bud at all. This date is the rarest of the Philadelphia dates and is not often encountered. The small date variety is probably the most difficult of the three varieties to find but examples of this variety do turn up from time to time. I saw two 1837 small date pieces at the 1988 ANA Convention in Cincinnati.
- 1838** - Two known varieties from two obverses and two reverses. The two obverses are distinguished by the position of the second 8 in the date relative to the curl. One of the two reverses has the letters in the word STATES widely spaced. This date is considered scarce but in my opinion it is overrated. I have been able to observe examples of this date almost as frequently as the 1835. It is not as common as the 1834 or 1836 dates.
- 1838-C** - Two known varieties from one obverse and two reverses. There is only one known obverse with a small C mintmark over the left side of the digit 3 in the date. This is the first half eagle struck at the Charlotte branch mint and the rarest date in the Classic half eagle series. Examples of this date usually come well worn with near mint state examples being prohibitively rare. The two reverses of this year can be distinguished by the position of the leaves under the U in UNITED. One reverse has two leaves under the letter U. The other reverse has one leaf nearly touching the letter U. While both varieties are rare, examples of both varieties have been observed during the course of this study. Of importance is the fact that the reeding on the Charlotte coins is much wider and stronger than on the coins struck at the Philadelphia mint. This makes it relatively easy to detect a mintmark added to an 1838 specimen struck in Philadelphia.
- 1838-D** - One known variety. This is the first half eagle struck at the Dahlonega branch mint and second rarest date in the Classic half eagle series. While examples of this date are rare a surprising number of these pieces appear in the higher circulated grades. There is only one known variety and the obverse has a date that is strongly doubled at the base. The large D mintmark is located over the digit 3 in the date. Dahlonega coins of this date also have a wider reeding than pieces struck in Philadelphia during this year. Again an added mintmark

could be detected by the reeding gauge and also by comparison with the die characteristics of the only known variety for this year.

My work with the Classic half eagles has proven to be a rewarding and fascinating experience. While I feel I have learned a lot about the series during the past two years I am well aware that there is still much work to be done. I have seen the 12 pieces in the series in the holdings of the American Numismatic Society and studied the 34 Classic half eagles in the National Collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. I have also had an opportunity to study 67 Classic half eagles owned by a private collector. These opportunities indicate that I have seen most of the known varieties but I expect that further studies and observations will turn up more varieties and additional information on the series. I would hope to eventually publish a reference book on the Classic gold half eagles and include the results of my work on the Classic gold quarter eagles as well. However this could prove to be a long and slow process because of the limited number of pieces available for study and because of the limited amount of information currently available on the series. At this time the work is progressing and only time will indicate what the final results might be.

John W. McCloskey



1837 Classic Half Eagle

DISCOVERY OF A NEW 1836 QUARTER VARIETY; B-5

One of the greatest thrills for a variety collector is discovering an unlisted variety. I had the fortune of locating one at the 1988 ANA Convention in Cincinnati. It is the sixth new variety since A.W. Browning's THE EARLY QUARTER DOLLARS OF THE UNITED STATES, published by Wayte Raymond in 1925. It is the first new variety since J. Reiver's VARIETY IDENTIFICATION MANUAL FOR U.S. QUARTER DOLLARS, 1796 - 1838, (VIM) published in 1987.

The new variety, designated B-5, is a hitherto unknown marriage of two known dies. The obverse die of B-4 was mated with the reverse die of B-1. This attribution was confirmed by John McCloskey, and others. Both sides of the coin show all of the die cracks known for the dies, and the coin was undoubtedly struck after both B-4 and B-1. The obverse die cracks are more developed than seen on B-4's. This is particularly true of the die crack from the lowest curl through the edge of the 6 in the date to the rim. The mark in the picture between S13 and the date is a cut on the coin, which caused metal to be thrown up on both sides of it, not a die crack.

Since all four of the obverse dies used in 1836 have extensive die cracks, some study is involved in attributing this variety. The heavy die crack touching the right side of the 6 meets a lighter die crack from S1 to the neck. On late die states of B-1, the reverse has a curved die crack through STATE.



B-5 Obverse

Other points to check in attributing this variety are the position of S13, and the left edge of the curl over the date. Two points of S13 are about $\frac{1}{4}$ mm from the nearby curl. The left edge of the curl over the 6 is a tiny bit left of center of the 6. On the reverse, the point of the stem is over the right side of the C in 25 C.

The reverse die crack through the letters D STATE is the same as seen on B-1. However, B-1 does appear without the reverse die crack.

Please let me know if any other B-5 quarters are found by our members.



B-5 Reverse

Bob Spangler & Jules Reiver

ATTENTION COLLECTORS:

One other note for quarter collectors. The description of the 1829 B-5 quarter in my VIM on Quarter Dollars has an incorrect photo. The photo of the obverse, at the top of page 29 is not correct. Cross it out. The two photos at the bottom of page 28 are correct, and can be used to attribute the variety. B-5 has the obverse of B-4, with the small 0. The verbal descriptions of B-5 are correct and should be used.

Jules Reiver

Unlisted Die Characteristics of the 1818 B-8 Quarter Dollar

Collecting any series by die variety entails the use of a thick magnifying glass and even thicker eye glasses. I've found these have helped me with my bust quarter inclinations. I have more than a few 1818 B-8 quarters and recently studied them and found some interesting reverse die characteristics not mentioned in either the Browning or Reiver references. I will discuss these with the aid of some enlarged photographs of an early die state B-8 to save your eyesight.

1. The inside left side of E in TED has recutting visible on all B-8's I have seen. As depicted in the photograph below, it appears to me to be the misspelling and consequent misengraving of the letter U. The undercutting curves exactly as the letter U in UNITED. The engraver may have tried to spell UNITED wrong as UNITUD (a mistake similar to the 1822 and 1828 25/50 quarters).



2. The stem of the lower berry is cross cut by a very heavy curved die gouge. This is shown in the photograph below and is almost too heavy to be a casual error. This characteristic also appears on all B-8's I have seen.



Browning mentions proofs were made from the B-8 dies. I searched in vain through my auction library for a photographed lot of a proof B-8 to verify these die characteristics. Please examine your 1818 B-8's and let me know if you find something different.

Bill Bugert JRCS #116

The Other Corrado Romano Sale

The estate of Corrado Romano was auctioned by Stack's on June 16, 17 and 18, 1987. About six weeks prior to that, on May 2nd, in one of those strange twists of fate, the firm that Corrado Romano founded, Worthy Coin Corporation, which is now operated by his son, Don, auctioned a grading set of 1795 half dollars compiled by the elder Romano between 1927 and 1939. The original set was composed of 24 coins in a Wayne Raymond holder, each with a CR number neatly affixed above it and ranged in grade from Poor (CR 1) to Choice Uncirculated (CR 24).

CR, to use his monogram for brevity, attempted, as had a number of contemporary coin dealers, to provide a solution to the grading controversies of the day by assembling sets of coins in a logical progression of grades as a reference guide. One can begin to imagine the magnitude of this opus when one considers that CR tried to do this for each type in every minor denomination from 1793 onward. Among the more impressive of these sets and, incidentally, one that he enjoyed showing to his customers, was a 28 piece accumulation of 1877 Indian Cents, the last four of which (CR 25 through CR 28) were various qualities of proof.

Two nearly simultaneous events conspired to sound the death knell for sets such as these. The first occurred in 1958 with the introduction of a compact, affordable grading guide by Brown and Dunn; the second was the increased demand for and subsequent increase in price of U. S. coins in the early 1960's. While no amount of argument could convince CR and many others of the efficacy of the former, the sheer economic impact of the latter, fueled by collector demand for type set material, caused wholesale decimation of grading sets. As was often the case, some examples were retained for personal collections and, in this particular instance, passed into the Stack's sale mentioned above.

Forgive me for getting too far afield but, to pursue the story of the 1795 halves, it will be necessary to digress to early 1945. Remember, there was a war on and home heating oil, in addition to being expensive, was being

rationed. CR, in a fit of false frugality, decided that he could heat the entire house by stoking up the fireplace and save some of the precious oil needed to fire the burner. An ember from this conflagration set the roof ablaze and, while no one was seriously injured, the roof was a total loss. In the midst of all the confusion of the fire and having just seen her gentle, scholar-husband transformed into a pyromaniac before her eyes, CR's wife, Millie, in her best nurse's voice, managed to answer an incessantly ringing telephone with a line that could have come straight from Dylan Thomas: "I can't talk to you right now...my house is on fire."

Another result of this disaster was the creation of a numismatic time warp into which the 1795 grading set neatly nestled for over 40 years. In order to help defray the cost of a new roof, CR sold the set, minus the two highest grade specimens which would become lots 570 and 571 in the Stack's sale, to James "Jimmy" Stiff who had been, until that point in time, an ardent collector of Canadian coins. As an interesting historical footnote, Stiff, at the urging of two numismatic acquaintances, Tom Knutson and Bert Barstow, had been making notes on the varieties of Canadian large cents. He is reported to have examined over 50,000 pieces in a 15 year span in preparing his work. Compare this, if you would, to Overton's perusal of 10,000 bust halves. Tragically, the Stiff manuscript has subsequently disappeared.

While the set was in Stiff's possession, the three lowest grade coins were removed from the collection. CR 1 became a pocket piece, CR 2 very likely also ended up as a pocket piece, although its exact fate is unknown, and CR 3 was sold for the princely sum of \$2.60 to E. B. Githens in 1948.

In the early 1960's, possibly 1961, Michael Mathey, a prominent real estate developer, acquired the balance of the set (CR 4 through CR 22) from Stiff. Over the intervening years, the highest grade piece remaining (CR 22) passed into the hands of Mathey's father-in-law, Jerome Silverstein. At long last, Mathey consigned the remaining 18 coins (CR 4 through CR 21) to Worthy Coin Corporation for auction in 1987. Even though CR had gone to rest in Elysian Fields some three years earlier, it somehow seemed fitting that they had returned "home".

The coins were carefully catalogued, then sent to NAS for attribution and, a short time after their return, became the property of various bidders on

The Other Corrado Romano Sale

May 2, 1987. In commemoration of this final dispersal, Mike Conroy of NAS presented a folio of pictures of the last 18 coins to Don C. A. Romano in memory of his father on the day of the auction.

The list that follows is composed of the original 24 coins with their CR numbers and grades as assigned by Corrado Romano and attributions, save for the last two, by NAS. A pedigree is also included for the edification of those to whom it may be of interest.

CR 1	Poor		WCC - J. Stiff - pocket piece
CR 2	Fair		WCC - J. Stiff - lost, probably a pocket piece
CR 3	about Good		WCC - J. Stiff - E. B. Githens (1948)
CR 4	Good	O-125	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1506
CR 5	G - VG	O-119	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1507
CR 6	Very Good	O-113	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1508
CR 7	Very Good+	O-108	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1509
CR 8	about Fine	O-102	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1510
CR 9	about Fine+	O-110	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1511
CR 10	Fine	O-125	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1512
CR 11	Fine+	O-122	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1513
CR 12	F+ - VF	O-108	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1514
CR 13	about VF	O-108	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1515
CR 14	Very Fine	O-108	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1516
CR 15	Very Fine+	O-110	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1517
CR 16	VF+ - EF	O-108	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1518
CR 17	about EF	O-113	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1519
CR 18	Extra Fine	O-117a	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1520
CR 19	Extra Fine+	O-125	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1521
CR 20	EF+ - AU	O-110	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1522
CR 21	Almost Unc	O-113	WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - WCC lot 1523
CR 22	AU+ - Unc		WCC - J. Stiff - M. Mathey - J. Silverstein
CR 23	Uncirculated	O-112	Retained by CR - Stack's lot 570
CR 24	Choice Unc	O-119	Retained by CR - Stack's lot 571

Mike Conroy JRCS #017

A Die Study:

The 1834 Capped Bust Halves -- O-113 and O-114

The History In Early Half Dollar Die Varieties (1970, Revised Edition), Al Overton in describing the 1834 O-114 variety stated: "This variety, both obverse and reverse, is remarkably similar to the preceding number (O-113) and possibly one is a reworked version of the other."

Past research, by Dr. Ivan Leaman and others, has clearly shown that O-113 and O-114 originate from the same hubs, but this research has not conclusively resolved the controversy relating to the working dies themselves.

Recently, however, a study was made over a period of several months. Throughout this study the authors compiled definitive evidence demonstrating that O-113 and O-114 did, in fact, emit from the same working dies (both obverse and reverse).

The documentation that follows was developed by comparing characteristics of the individual coins. Methods incorporated in the study included varying degrees of magnification (10, 30, 45, and 150X), different light sources, precise measurements, acetate transparencies, and a "small book" of correspondence.

The Obverse In generally reviewing the obverses, it is significant to note that O-113 displays a "softness" of detail which is characteristic of late state dies. Also, and importantly, lapping lines can be seen throughout the portrait and in the surrounding fields.

Specific Points of Comparison

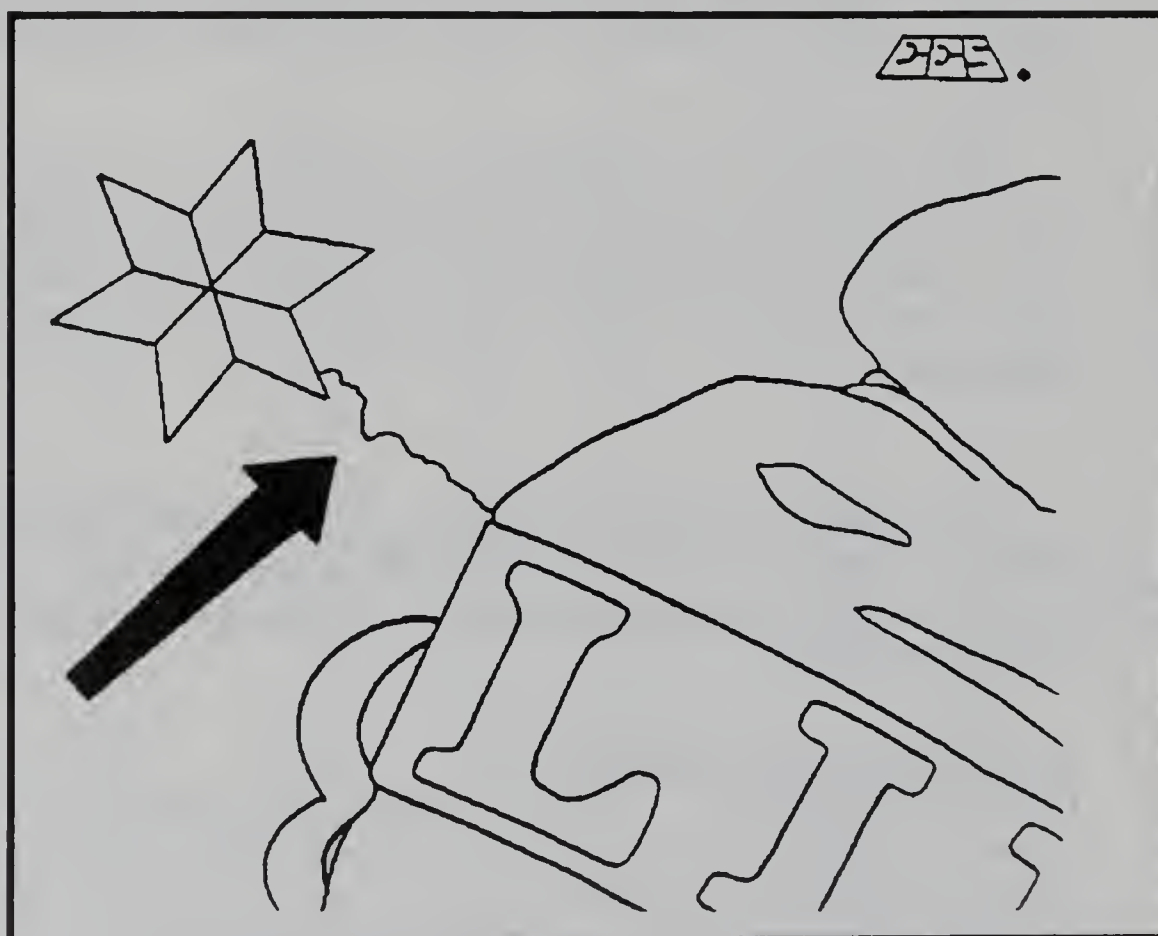
(1) Recutting of Stars -- Not mentioned in Overton's tome is the fact that most stars on both O-113 and O-114 are recut. The specimens should be held so that the star points (directly toward the dentils) are at the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock position on the left and right sides respectively. The positional

description of the star recutting (and in some cases, flowlines) on O-114 is as follows:

- A. S1 -- Tip K3
- B. S2 -- Left tip K5 and Tip K9
- C. S3 -- Left side K5 and K7
- D. S4 -- Underside K3 and Left side K5
- E. S6 -- Tip K9 and Left side K11
- F. S7 -- Tip K7 and Underside/Tip K9
- G. S8 -- Tip K1 and Right side/Tip K11
- H. S12 -- Tip K1 and K9 and Right side K11
- I. S13 -- Right side K11

The recutting on O-113 is an exact match in the shape, position, and direction of these points with the exception of points on S2-K9, S4-K3, S7-K7, S8-K1 which are now absent, and the additional recutting on S13.

(2) Obverse Die Crack -- Both O-113 and O-114 exhibit a very inconspicuous die crack (visible on strongly struck higher grade examples) from S7-K3 near the tip of the cap near the junction of cap and headband (see illustration).



Obverse Die Crack

(3) Other Notable Points -- Substantiating evidence displayed on both varieties is as follows:

- A. Indentations on both upper serifs of the L in LIBERTY. At this junction of serifs and upright, a lump on the upper right serif of I is visible at the junction of said serif and upright.
- B. There are several dull lines visible in the space above B and E.
- C. The curl, that terminates toward the earlobe, is forked.
- D. Lumps (rust pits?) are visible inside the left and right of the oval curl below the letter B in LIBERTY.

(4) Overlays -- Both overlays (produced at magnification) and direct measurements with a 10X optical comparator, show that the central device to star center pattern is an exact match between O-113 and O-114. This is particularly compelling evidence as the stars are medium in size and presently thought to have been hand cut.

The Reverse

The same general comments concerning the obverse also apply to reverse with O-113 again displaying the characteristic softness and lapping lines.

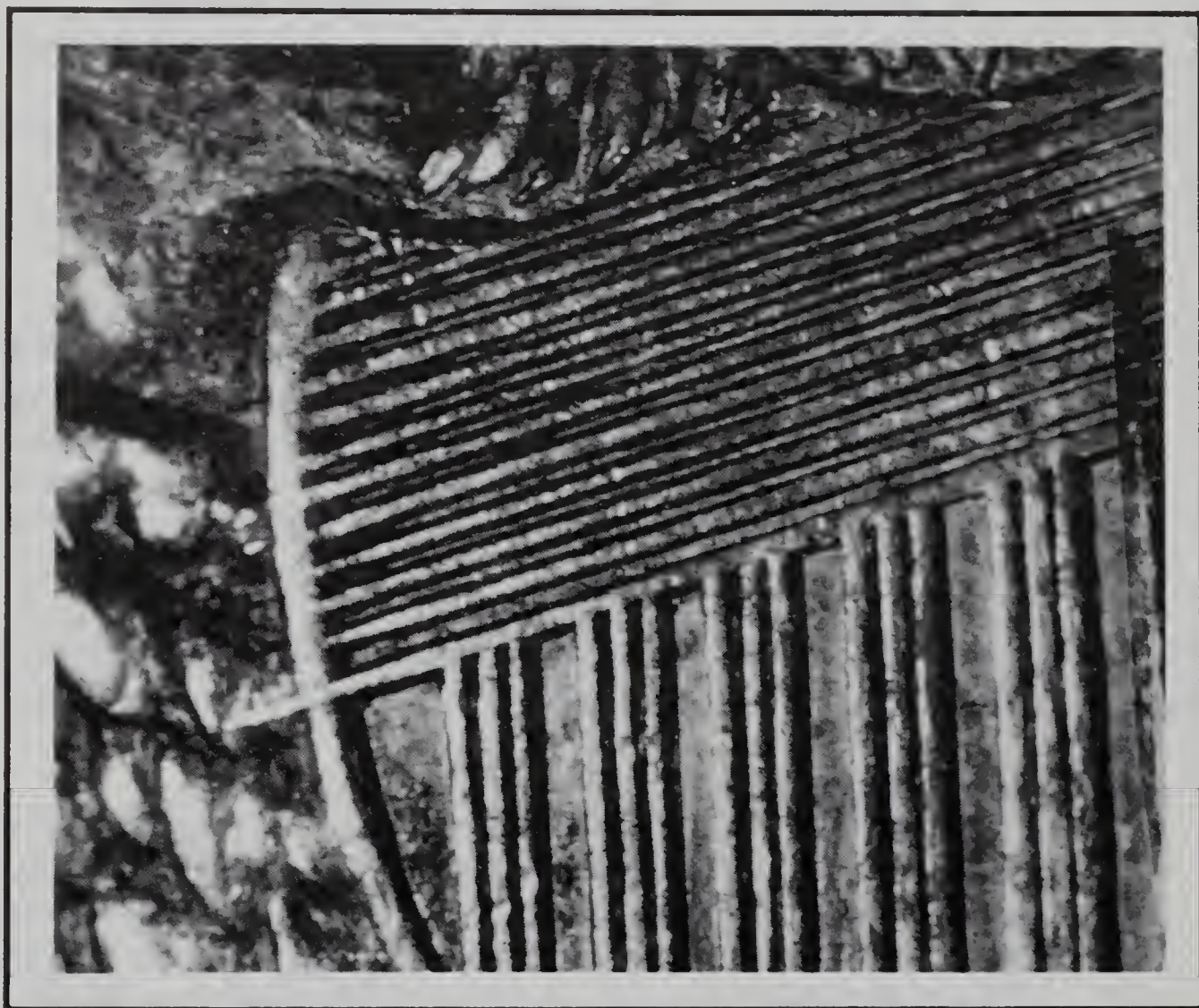
Specific Points of Comparison

(1) Recut Shield Lines and Crossbars on O-113 -- Virtually all of the lines in the stripes have been strengthened by this process. This is particularly unmistakable on the lines of stripes #1 through #4 which now clearly penetrate the lower shield border. The undercutting (discernible at a minimum of 30X) shows on the right side of most lines. This is an exact match, in both shape and direction, to O-114. Additionally, the crossbars, several of which penetrate the left shield border on both O-113 and O-114, are similarly strengthened on O-113 with the O-114 undercutting discernible (see pg 34).

(2) Recut Eagle's Leg on O-113 -- Most talon scales between the body and first two talons have been strengthened by recutting. The "missing" segments of O-114 have now been added. Again, the O-114 undertype is visible on most specimens graded above VF (see pg 36).

(3) A Repunched 5 on O-113 -- The 5 (of the denomination) shows heavy die polishing lines, down and to the right, particularly visible around the serif. The remains of the upright of the previous punched 5 (on O-114) is

visible at high magnification (45X or more) between the serif and the upright. Additionally, faint traces are visible as a jagged curving line outside the loop of the 5 numeral (see pg 37).



*Recutting of Shield Lines and Crossbars on Reverse of O-113
(The 114 undertype is particularly evident on the right side of lines 2 and 3 of stripe #1 and line 1 of stripe #2 near the lower shield border.)*

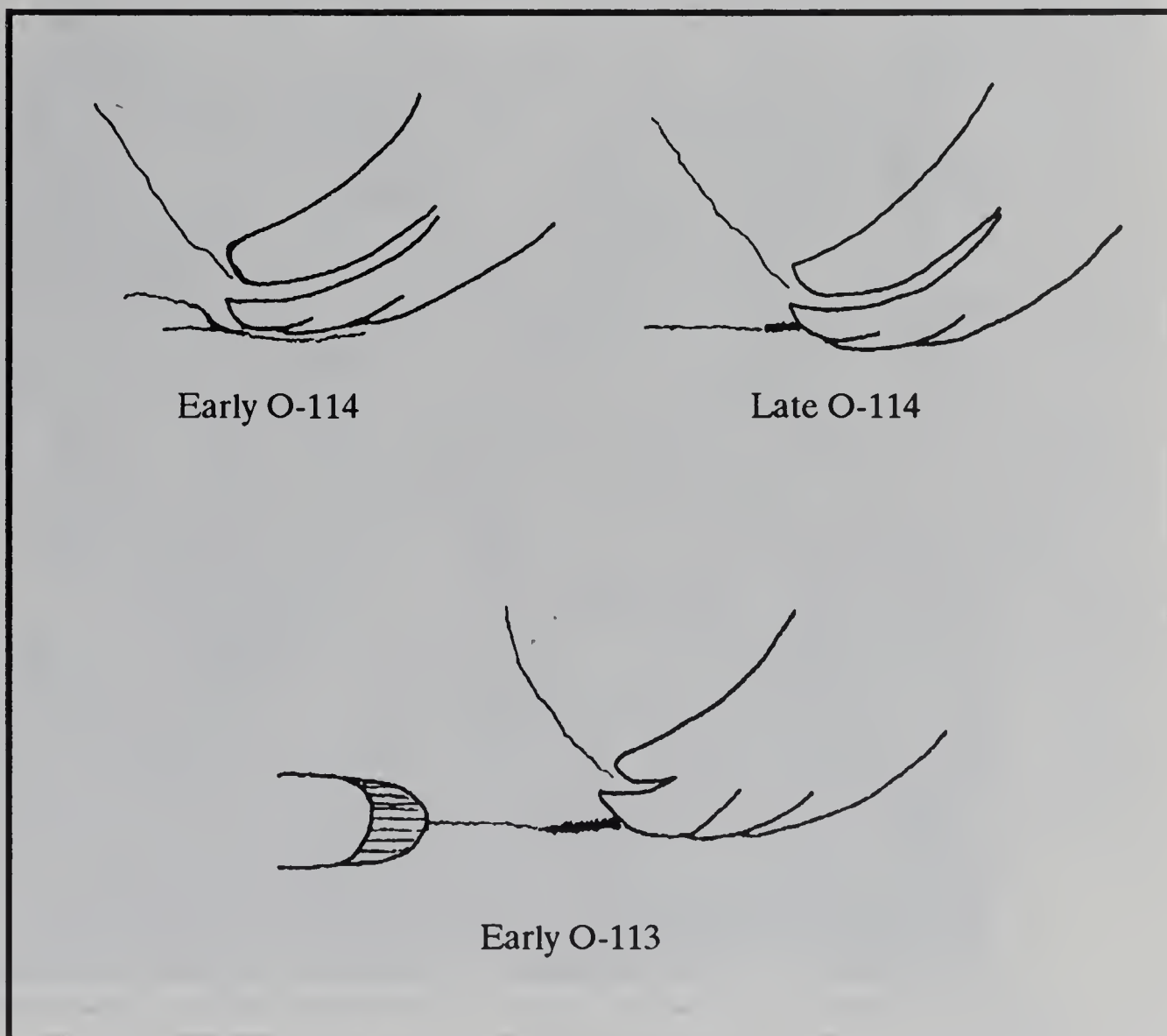
(4) Bifurcation and Recutting/Repunching of Letters in Legend -- The bases of NITED, on both O-113 and O-114, show the same characteristic bifurcation. Individual letters on both show varying degrees of recutting and repunching, serifs added and/or cut/punched deeper, etc. Among the more obvious points are:

- A. Upper and lower serifs of ITED
- B. Upper serifs of TE in STATES

C. Upper serif of F in OF

D. Upper serif in ERI in AMERICA

(5) Die Cracks at Eagle's Left Wing Tip -- A pair of characteristic die cracks occur on both O-113 and O-114. The upper die crack is essentially the same on both, although more faint on O-113 due to the lapping process. On early state O-114's the lower die crack appears below and along the side of the lower feather to the field in front, where it is joined by another die crack slightly up and to the left then over towards the dentil opposite. On late O-114's the die crack underneath is fading and the upper portion strengthens and joins the lower feather. On O-113 this die crack is further strengthened and extends to the dentil opposite.



The Reverse Die Cracks

(6) Center Dot on O-113 -- The center dot is still faintly visible on O-113, and late O-114's, as a triangular lump on the underside of crossbar 4 almost directly above line #1 of stripe #4. The dot is barely visible on most specimens, even at high magnification (45X and above). (Note that it helps to view this area while slowly rotating the coin--to take advantage of a fixed angled light source).

In considering the above points, it is worth mentioning that most of these characteristics are solely working die related since the devices with which they are associated (stars, letters, lines, etc.) are hand punched or cut directly into the working dies themselves. Consequently these effects could not have existed at any previous stage.



Recutting on Eagle's leg on Reverse of O-113

In conclusion, as can assuredly be seen from the foregoing, O-113 and O-114, in fact, emit from the same working dies--with O-113 (being the late state) having been reworked.

In the hopes of a better, more accurate understanding of the series we therefore suggest that O-113 be delisted as a separate variety. Furthermore, we suggest a corrected relisting of O-113 as O-114a (modified).



Repunched 5 on Reverse of O-113

Craig Sholley and Edgar E. Souders

Life of a Goddess

This article is about the short life of one of the most popular and sought after die marriages (excluding the 1817/4, of course) in the capped bust half dollar series. The 1807 O-111 which consists of Obverse-8 and Reverse-H (which has the 50/20 blunder) is one of the most interesting and unusual varieties with a die crack that develops into a heavy break and runs from the chin to the bust and has the appearance of a beard. With an estimated four or five pieces known without the crack (beard) and only one or two known without the crack through the stars, which starts between the third and fourth star, it is safe to assume that not more than a handful of pieces were struck before the die began to deteriorate. As the beard began to develop, starting out spiderweb thin with a very small lump about 3/4 mm above the bust and another lump starting to form under the chin, the crack through the stars progressed up to S5 and down through S2 stopping at S1. As the beard gets heavier it extends down across the bust and up the face through the eye, eventually splitting into a Y at the hair curls over the eye with very late states extending to the right across the head band through the E of liberty and into the cap a couple of millimeters. At the same time the crack on the bust extends down to the milling just left of the date and the crack through the stars also extends down to the milling and up through stars 6 and 7 to the milling over the front of the cap.

What could have caused this type of crack? Excessive pressure from the press? All the pieces I have seen regardless of how heavy the cracks were have been well struck with well defined hair detail, a feature not usually seen on the other 1807's. Could they have reduced the pressure when they saw how weak the hair detail was if this was not the first set of dies used for the new design? It would be interesting to hear the opinions of some of the members as to why this variety developed this distinctive crack, a type which never developed on any other of the 450+ varieties in the series. Has any one ever seen a piece with only half a beard where the crack stops somewhere between the chin and bust?

Jay Fackelman

A SATURDAY SURPRISE

Surprisingly, this story begins on a Friday. On June 10th, when I stopped at the Post Office, to pick up my mail, I found an unexpected notice for a registered package. The package was from Sheridan Downey, III and I chuckled to myself at the irony of our letters passing en route. I had purchased another half from him just two days before. The parcel had a little bit of heft to it and I didn't waste any time opening it to see what he had sent. Enclosed were two bust halves, an 1827 O-127 and an 1828 O-123.

The 1827 was a pleasing looking strong Fine with a nasty edge ding. Because the O-127 marriage uses a late die state obverse, the stars were worn into the periphery. Bust Half Nuts know that O-127 is not pictured in Overton and a marriage of Obverse-4 (see O-106) and Reverse-U (see O-126). I decided to run by the bank to get my 1827 O-106 and O-126 set pieces for comparison.

After dinner, I started checking the attribution and everything seemed to agree. The coin's obverse matched my O-106 obverse and the reverse matched the O-126 reverse. But, when comparing the O-127 to a duplicate O-126 I had, something seemed strange when I flipped the O-126 over. There was some recutting at the left upper serif of the 7 in the date and there was a die chip between the curve of the 2 and the base, and no die crack at the base of the date. There were no traces of the recutting or die chip on my O-126 set piece. Before I could check it out, Janet reminded me about the play tickets for that evening and it was time to leave for the theater. I put everything aside, and we left. (We saw the Eastern Michigan University performance of "Greater Tuna." It was a delightful farce, and we enjoyed it.) We walked to and from the theater, and when I returned it was too late to do any more checking on the coins.

Saturday morning, I went at the coins again. When I bought the aforementioned dupe O-126, I must have checked it against the Overton book, as there was a note penned on the bottom of the flip. It said, "Late die state without die break at lower curl." In retrospect the note seems strange. The O-126 Obverse-19 die chips are not something you would polish away nor would the damage just cure itself through die usage. I must not have spent very much time looking at the coin, or maybe I was distracted at the time. I started checking the two O-126's against each other. No question on the reverses, they both matched. The obverses were another story. They were different. My set O-126 obverse checked against the Overton description. The dupe O-126 obverse, with the recuttings and chip mentioned above, didn't seem to match the new O-127 obverse. It had no trace of the recutting or the

die chip. My O-106 EF-40 set piece had what looked like faint recutting but not the die chip, and in fact had a die chip on the opposite side of curve of the two. The first thought that came to my mind was, could I have a new die marriage? Not likely, but a pleasant idea! I checked the dupe against a few other dupe 1827's I had at home. No help there. I started checking the star positions against Overton descriptions. The stars seemed to match the O-106 Obverse-4 points. The Overton keys for the obverse, 'Tiny serif top of 7, mouth open' never have seemed useful to me. The top right serif of my O-106 never seemed to be that much smaller than other 1827's. The 1827 O-127 had a tiny little seriflike projection coming off the left side of right serif. But there was nothing like that on my O-106. Could it be damage? I tried finding some other keys. Bingo, stars 3 and 4, 8 and 9, and 11 and 12 were spaced closer to each other than the rest. That matched the obverse of my O-106 and the obverse of the new O-127. For those people keeping score, I think we can add another VF-30 O-127 to the census of known pieces. I will bring the coin to ANA in August and let some of the other Bust Nuts confirm it or break it.

Now the question is, what is the story with the Obverse-6 recutting and the two different die chips, one on either side of the curve of the two? I would like to hear from any collectors who own either 1827 O-106's or O-127's. How many have O-106's with the recutting at the serif of the 7 and no die chips? Recutting and the die chip inside of the curve of the 2? Recutting and the die chip between the the curve of the 2 and the base? Ditto the 1827's. Any other die chips on either marriage? Either marriage without the recutting? If I get enough input, maybe I can pin down something other than the present assumption that the O-127's were a late die state use of Obv-6.

My newly attributed O-127 seems to be an early die state and has visible denticles clockwise from S8 to S4. Needless to say I sent the 1827 O-127 Fine back to Sheridan, and some other collector will get the opportunity to add it to their collection. It is a marriage on a number of want lists. And my new O-127 cost me less than one third of the price of the refused coin. You just never know where you can cherry pick. I certainly was surprised that Saturday.

The real irony of this story came when I told Sheridan of my luck. He informed me the collector offering the first O-127 had a similar story. The collector had misattributed 1827 O-126 and ended up with a dupe O-127, and for awhile was short the O-126 marriage.

The last and final question is, should I give the name of the dealer who sold me the misattributed 1827 O-126? Would it serve any purpose? Nahhhhhh! It goes without saying none of us are infallible.

David Davis

1989
COINAGE OF THE AMERICAS
Conference

America's Gold Coinage

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Saturday, November 4

9:00-10:00 Registration, coffee and rolls

10:00-10:30 WELCOME

10:30-12:30 FIRST SESSION

John W. McCloskey, "A Study of Classic Half Eagles, 1834-1838"
Michael J. Hodder, P. Scott Rubin and John J. Ford, "1861 Paquet
Double Eagles" (Presented by Mr. Rubin)

12:30-2:00 LUNCH BREAK

2:00-4:30 SECOND SESSION

Cory Gilliland, "A Proposed Gold Bullion Coinage in the 1850s"
Walter H. Breen, "Metallic Panaceas"
Charles R. Hoskins, "In Search of the Imperfect Coin: Modern
Counterfeiting of U.S. Gold Coins"

Sunday, November 5

9:30 Museum open to registrants, coffee and rolls

10:30-12:00 THIRD SESSION

Richard G. Doty, "The Charlotte Mint"
Q. David Bowers, "American Gold Coins and their Collectors"

12:00-1:30 LUNCH

1:30-3:30 FOURTH SESSION

Hon. James A. 'Jimmy' Hayes, "The Politics of Coinage as
Illustrated by Recent Commemorative Issues"
Elizabeth Jones, Reflections on Twentieth Century Gold Coinage"

3:30 RECEPTION

THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

